



National Aeronautics and Space Administration
Goddard Space Flight Center
Wallops Flight Facility, Wallops Island, Virginia

Inside Wallops

Volume XX-02

Number 25

August 19, 2002

After a Decade, NASA's Topex/Poseidon Adventure Sails On Thanks to Wallops Team

It's been sailing the blackness of space for a decade: a silent sentinel, watching over the world's oceans, looking for signs of the mysterious El Nino and La Nina phenomena.

how ocean circulation affects climate. The satellite provides input for long-term climate forecasting and prediction models.



Photo by Tom Burton.

Wallops TOPEX Team (left to right) Dennis Lockwood, George Hayne, Jeff Lee, Craig Purdy, Larry Rossi, Carol Purdy, Art Grothouse, Ann McDowell, Anita Brenner, David Hancock, Lisa Brittingham, Annette Conger, Hayden Gordon, Peggy Jester and Barton Bull. Absent: Ron Brooks, Ron Forsythe and Norm Schultz.

TOPEX/Poseidon, a joint NASA-French Space Agency mission to study ocean circulation and its effect on climate, recently passed the 10-year mark.

Some 46,763 orbits after launch, the spacecraft, designed to fly three to five years, continues to precisely map the surface height of 95 percent of Earth's ice-free oceans every 10 days. In doing so, it has revolutionized the study of Earth's oceans.

Support systems onboard the spacecraft are healthy, and the TOPEX altimeter is continuing to collect data with unprecedented precision and a Wallops team is largely responsible for its success.

Wallops personnel developed the specifications for the TOPEX altimeter, monitored assembly by the Johns Hopkins Applied Physics Laboratory, extensively analyzed its pre-launch testing performance, developed all its data correction algorithms and have continued to monitor its day-to-day performance in space. The Wallops team also has the responsibility for recovery commanding from anomalous conditions and for the ongoing data calibration.

Its continuous data on sea surface height, wind speed and wave height have given us a new understanding of

TOPEX/Poseidon produced the first global views of seasonal current changes. It maps year-to-year changes in upper-ocean heat storage. The satellite has improved our understanding of tides, producing the world's most precise global tidal maps and demystifying deep-ocean tides and their effect on ocean circulation.

TOPEX/Poseidon monitors global mean sea-level changes, an effective indicator of the consequence of global temperature change. Its data are input into atmospheric models for forecasting hurricane seasons and individual storm severity. And the satellite has improved our knowledge of Earth's gravity field.

Wallops shorts..... Balloon Launch

A NASA scientific balloon was successfully launched August 13 from Lynn Lake, Canada. The 39.57 million cubic foot balloon carried a solar and heliospheric physics experiment and a communications system test package using two commercial grade Iridium modems. Payload data was sent from the balloon modems to a Ground Control Station in Building F-7, and test commands were sent from the Ground Control Station to the balloon payload. Dr. John Clem of the University of Delaware was the principal investigator. Total flight time was 38 hours 40 minutes.

In the News

Florida Today -- "Florida Officials Reassured Future Launches to Remain at KSC"

Eastern Shore News -- "Students Spend Summer Vacation Working at NASA Wallops Flight Facility"

Eastern Shore News -- "84 Lumber Donates to Space Flight Academy"

WBOC TV -- "Eye in the Sky" segment featuring the NASA Educator Resource Center at the Visitor Center, aired August 13

NASA Annual Honor Awards

The following individuals and groups are the recipients of 2001 NASA Honor Awards to be presented at the upcoming NASA Honor Awards Ceremony. Congratulations to each of them.

An Exception Service Medal has been awarded to Thomas Jay Pittman, chief of the Range and Mission Management Office. Pittman's award is for his outstanding technical innovation, leadership and performance to Goddard's missions and the Wallops Flight Facility.



Photo by James-Mason Foley

Jay Pittman

The NASA Public Service Medal has been awarded to Steven Peterzen, of the National Scientific Balloon Facility, Palestine, Texas.

Group Achievement Awards were presented to:
The Ultra-Long Duration Ballooncraft Development Team

Wallops Engineering Services Procurement Team

Wallops Flight Facility Automated Tracking System

Identity Theft Prevention

There is no sure way to prevent identity theft short of living in another century, paying cash only and working for cash only. With credit card offers coming through the mail daily, having to produce a drivers' license to cash checks and Internet buying a daily occurrence, it is virtually impossible to prevent a determined thief from stealing personal information.

There are ways to lessen the odds of it occurring. Some of the following may seem obvious, but remember, a little bit of healthy paranoia is not a bad thing.



Never leave your purse or wallet in the car even if it is hidden. Thieves may see you put your purse in the trunk or under the seat.

Take a fanny pack with your car keys, a little cash and your driver's license. Leave your car in a busy area with a lot of other cars not in a deserted lot. Isolated cars make great targets.

Don't load your purse down with credit cards. Only carry what is necessary. Never carry your social security card or birth certificate in your purse or wallet. Only carry your passport if necessary for travel.

Do not keep ATM personal identification numbers (PIN) or other passwords in your purse or wallet. Memorize them. Avoid using easily discovered passwords or PIN number/codes, such as your birth date, phone number, or address.



Keep a list or copy of all your credit and bank accounts in a secure place, such as a safe, lock box or locked file cabinet. Include account numbers, expiration dates and telephone numbers of the customer service and fraud departments.

Do not have your social security or drivers license number printed on your checks.

Order your credit reports from each of the three credit bureaus at least once a year to insure that information they have is accurate.

Only list your name and number, without your address, in the local telephone book.

Register all of your credit cards with a credit card protection agency, and then place that agency's stickers on your credit cards. This can be done for free through some banks. If your cards are stolen, you only have to call one number.

Cut up, shred or otherwise destroy pre-approved credit offers before putting them in your trash. This should also be done with credit card statements, bank statements and all other documents that

have personal information on them. Never throw credit card receipts away in public trashcans.

Never give personal information over the phone unless you have initiated the call and know to whom you are speaking.

Place bills, letters, applications, etc. containing personal information in a secure outgoing mailbox and make sure your mailbox is secure for incoming mail.

Do not write account numbers on checks or the outside of envelopes.

Never write social security numbers on checks, and if possible, avoid using them for school or employee identification.

Keep tax records, canceled checks, paid bills, in a secure place, or destroy them before throwing them away.

Ask your bank to require a password of anyone accessing your account.

Do not write your name and address as an adjunct to a credit card sale.

To have your name and address deleted from marketer's lists by writing to: Direct Marketing Association's Mail Preference Service (PO Box 9008, Farmingdale, NY 11735) or Telephone Preference Service (P.O. Box 9015, Farmingdale, NY 11735)

Be very careful when ordering something over the Internet. Make sure the server is secure.

WEMA Announces New Cafeteria Manager and New Breakfast Hours

The Wallops Exchange and Morale Association (WEMA) is pleased to announce the addition of Murad F. Gozali to their staff as the cafeteria manager. Gozali is a Certified Dietary Manager (CDM) and also a Certified Food Protection Professional (CFPP).



Photo by Keith Koehler.

Liza Crockett, WESCO, pays Cafeteria Manager Murad Gozali for her lunch during his first week on the job.

Effective today, August 19, the Cafeteria will offer breakfast from 7 a.m. until 9 a.m. The new hours will be on a temporary basis. Send comments to Gozali by email at: mfgozali@pop100.gsfc.nasa.gov or stop by and say hello.

NASA Professional Development Program Graduates

NASA Administrator, Sean O'Keefe recognized employees who recently completed NASA's Professional Development Program (PDP) in a ceremony held July 25.

"Part of your leadership responsibility now is to bring the energy and enthusiasm you have to help others improve," said O'Keefe. He noted that NASA leaders need to create an atmosphere of respect and professionalism, give people the resources required to carry out their tasks and notice and recognize accomplishments.

PDP participants are competitively selected by their Center. The program involves a year-long intensive leadership development process that combines developmental work assignments, leadership development workshops, briefings by NASA's leadership, training opportunities and individual coaching.

The PDP provides future leaders a broader perspective of the Agency and the impact of NASA programs.

Linda Parish, NASA Headquarters, who has been on detail to Wallops Management Operations Directorate, and Thom Arceneaux, Wallops Facilities Management Branch, were among the 17 NASA employees in this year's program.

Other Goddard Space Flight Center participants were Rex Elliott, Earth Sciences Procurement Office, and Bob Savage, Applied Engineering and Technology Directorate.

Lunch N Learn

An Employee Assistance Program Lunch N Learn will be held on August 22 in the Williamsburg Room, Building E-2, from 11:30 a.m. to 12:30 p.m.

This month's topic is Defining Conflict and will be presented by Tom Northern, our new EAP counselor.

- The agenda follows:
- Defining conflict
 - Discussion-causes of conflict and characteristics of conflict
 - Stages of conflict
 - Conflict in the Workplace
 - Methods of Dealing with Conflict
 - Interpersonal Styles
 - The DESC Method

Inside Wallops is an official publication of Goddard Space Flight Center and is published by the Wallops Office of Public Affairs, Extension 1584, in the interest of Wallops employees. Recent and past issues of Inside Wallops also may be found on the NASA Wallops Flight Facility homepage: www.wff.nasa.gov

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